



DC  
COMICS™

12

AT LAST, THE ORIGIN OF  
THE

# SUPERMAN™

JAMES  
ROBINSON  
GENE  
HA

NOV 2012

RATED T+ TEEN PLUS

DCCOMICS.COM

FINAL  
ISSUE!





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COMICS™

12

AT LAST, THE ORIGIN OF  
THE

# STEEL

FINAL  
ISSUE!

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PLEASE...  
DON'T KILL  
ME.



NO, WHAT  
AM I SAYING? OF  
**COURSE** YOU'RE  
GOING TO KILL  
ME.



THEN...DON'T  
KILL ME BEFORE I'VE  
SEEN MY FAMILY ONE  
FINAL TIME...AT  
**LEAST** THAT.



THAT, TOO...  
**SILLY** TO SAY, TO SEE  
THEM WOULD MEAN YOU  
LETTING ME GO, WHICH I  
**KNOW** FULL WELL YOU'D  
NEVER DO.



THEN LET'S  
BE **DONE** WITH THIS, SIR,  
FOR I TIRE OF YOUR FACE  
AND ODOR!



IF I'M TO  
DIE, THEN LET'S BE  
**ABOUT** IT.

*It was  
1838...*



# TIMES PAST: 1838

## Family Ties Part I

James  
Robinson  
writer

Gene  
Ha  
artist

Art  
Lyon  
colorist

Todd  
Klein  
letterer

Tony  
Harris  
cover  
artist

Ha &  
Lyon  
variant  
cover  
artists

Will  
MOSS  
editor

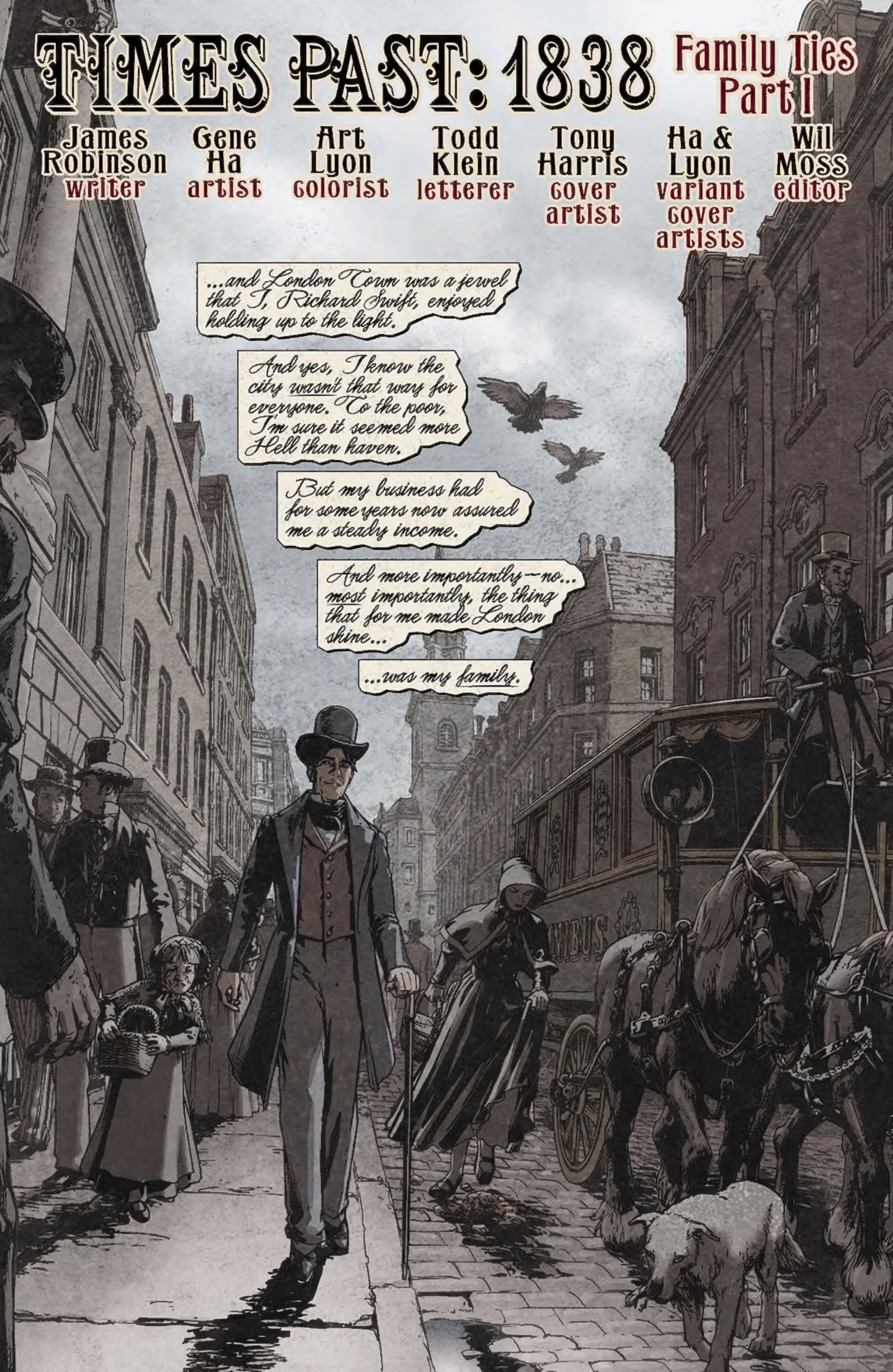
*...and London Town was a jewel  
that I, Richard Swift, enjoyed  
holding up to the light.*

*And yes, I know the  
city wasn't that way for  
everyone. To the poor,  
I'm sure it seemed more  
Hell than haven.*

*But my business had  
for some years now assured  
me a steady income.*

*And more importantly -- no...  
most importantly, the thing  
that for me made London  
shine...*

*...was my family.*







*I will always, if I live  
but another day or another  
century...*

*...recall the aroma  
of my wife Enid's  
cooking.*



*We had a servant, Dopsy—  
clean and tidy, if a tad slow...  
and yet my dear wife refused  
to let her or anyone at the  
oven but herself.*

*And coming home to  
Enid's delicious creations  
made even the darkest,  
dreariest night seem  
brighter.*

*That and her  
smile and her  
kisses.*

HOW  
MANY SHILLINGS  
IN A GUINEA,  
SAM?

UM. I...I  
NEED TO COUNT.  
I THINK I KNOW...  
UM...

COME, COME,  
LAD, YOU NEED TO **KNOW**,  
NOT "THINK YOU DO," IN THE  
WORLD OF FINANCE.

DON'T HARASS THE  
BOY, DICKIE. DON'T BE THAT  
MAN...THE SORT WHERE EVERY  
WORD FROM THEIR LIPS IS A  
QUESTION OR A TEST THAT  
WOULD MAKE A SON DREAD  
THEIR COMPANY.

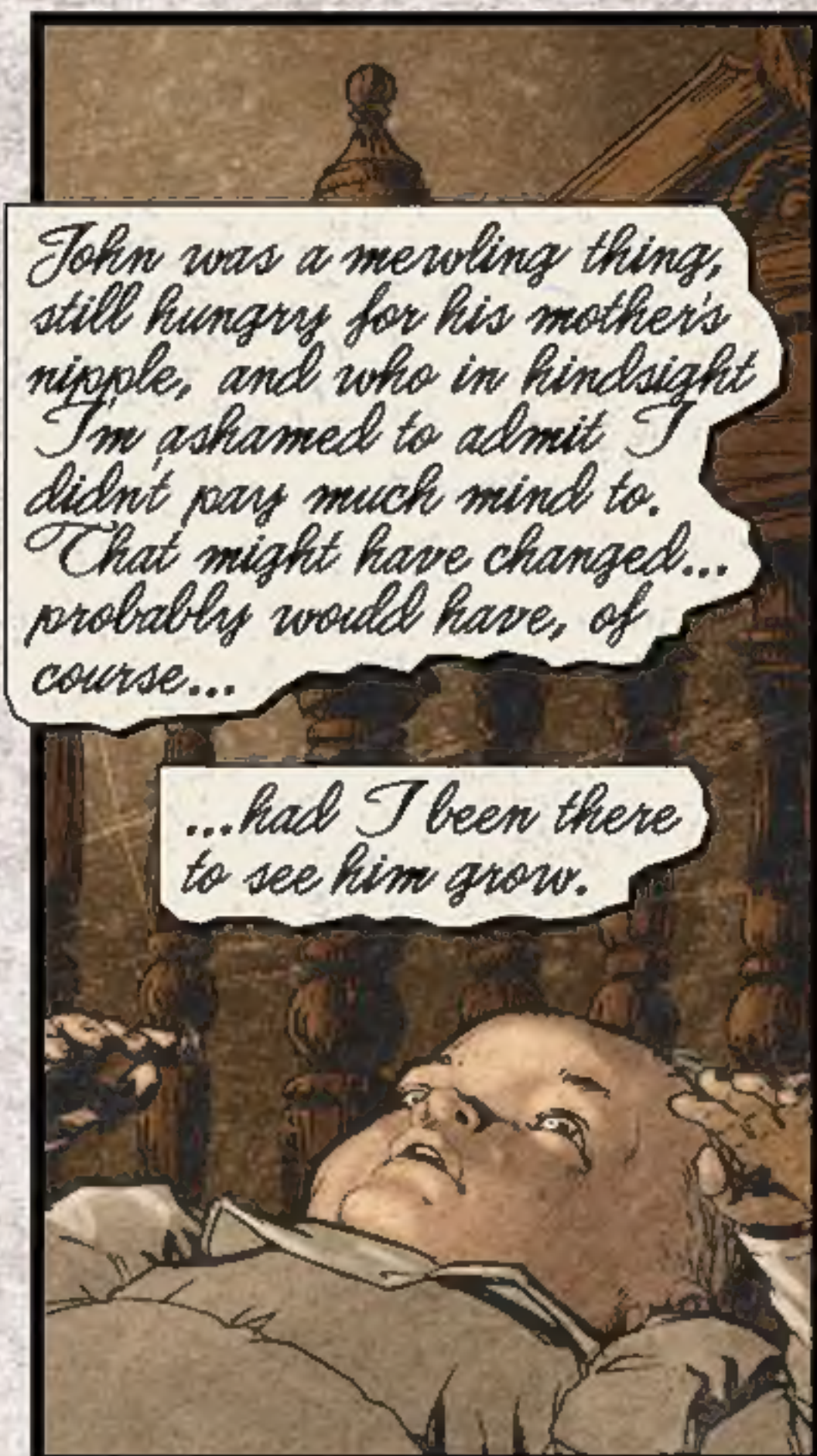
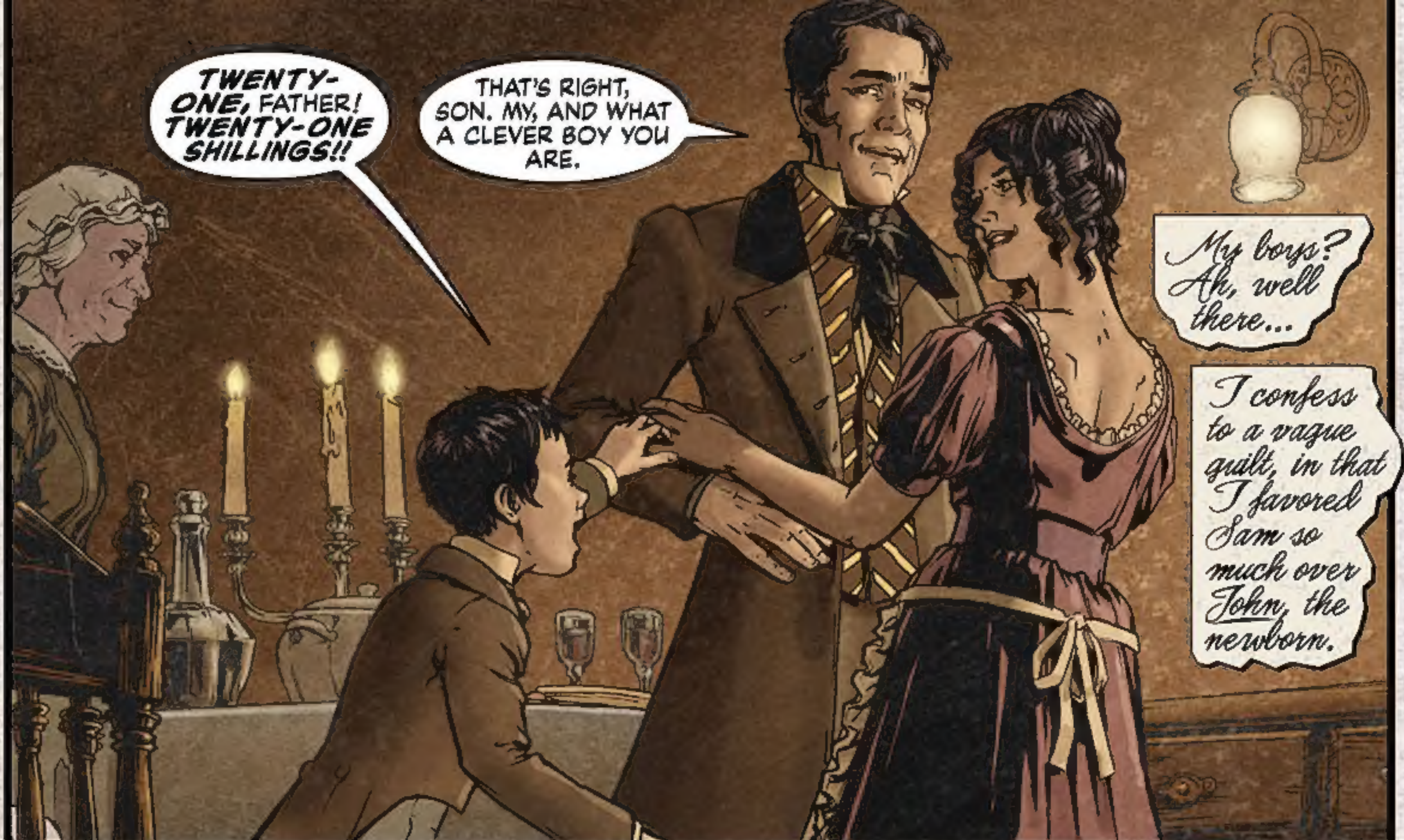
YOU...

...ARE A WISE CREATURE, AND  
THE FACT THAT YOU'RE THE LOVE  
OF MY LIFE IS OF NO SURPRISE.

MY DARLING  
WIFE.

MY  
WONDERFUL--  
IF FREQUENTLY  
CHALLENGING--  
HUSBAND.







*That was to change, of course. I changed and became the Shade. And all of it due to my acquaintance with one Simon Culp.*

*I remember the first time I met him. It was through my business...importers' agent...finding shops in need of food and wares from foreign and exotic lands, and vice versa.*

*This was how I met Culp, he--*

R SWIFT IMPORTER

*No, I'm skipping ahead. One other player in the drama I should accord mention of first--my friend, the writer Charles Dickens.*



*I met Charles in a coffee house, no mystery there. I liked his spark, he liked my wit, and so a friendship grew.*

*I'd chance by my office from time to time to chat of the day's events or sometimes to relate his ideas for a story if some aspect of it wasn't completely to his liking.*

YES, YES, I KNOW YOU LIKE PICKWICK. YOU'VE TOLD ME. EVERYONE'S TOLD ME HOW MUCH THEY LIKE PICKWICK, SCROOGE AND OLIVER, TOO. BUT IT'S ALL SO LIGHT IN COMPARISON TO MY LITERARY DESIGNS.

THEN WHAT STORY HAVE YOU IN MIND TO TELL?

I HAVE THE BEGINNINGS OF ONE IDEA, DICK...SET IN THE PAST DURING THE GORDON RIOTS AND A MUCH DARKER TALE.

*And so Charles was there that day...*







...when Culp first showed his face.

GENTLEMEN, HELLO, HELLO. MIGHT ONE O' YOU BE RICHARD SWIFT?



I AM HE, **INDEED**. AND YOU ARE...?

SIMON CULP, AT YOUR SERVICE.

AT **MY** SERVICE? AND **HOW** MIGHT THAT BE?

AHH, WELL LET ME EXPLAIN...



FIRST, YOUR COMPANION, SIR, SURELY...

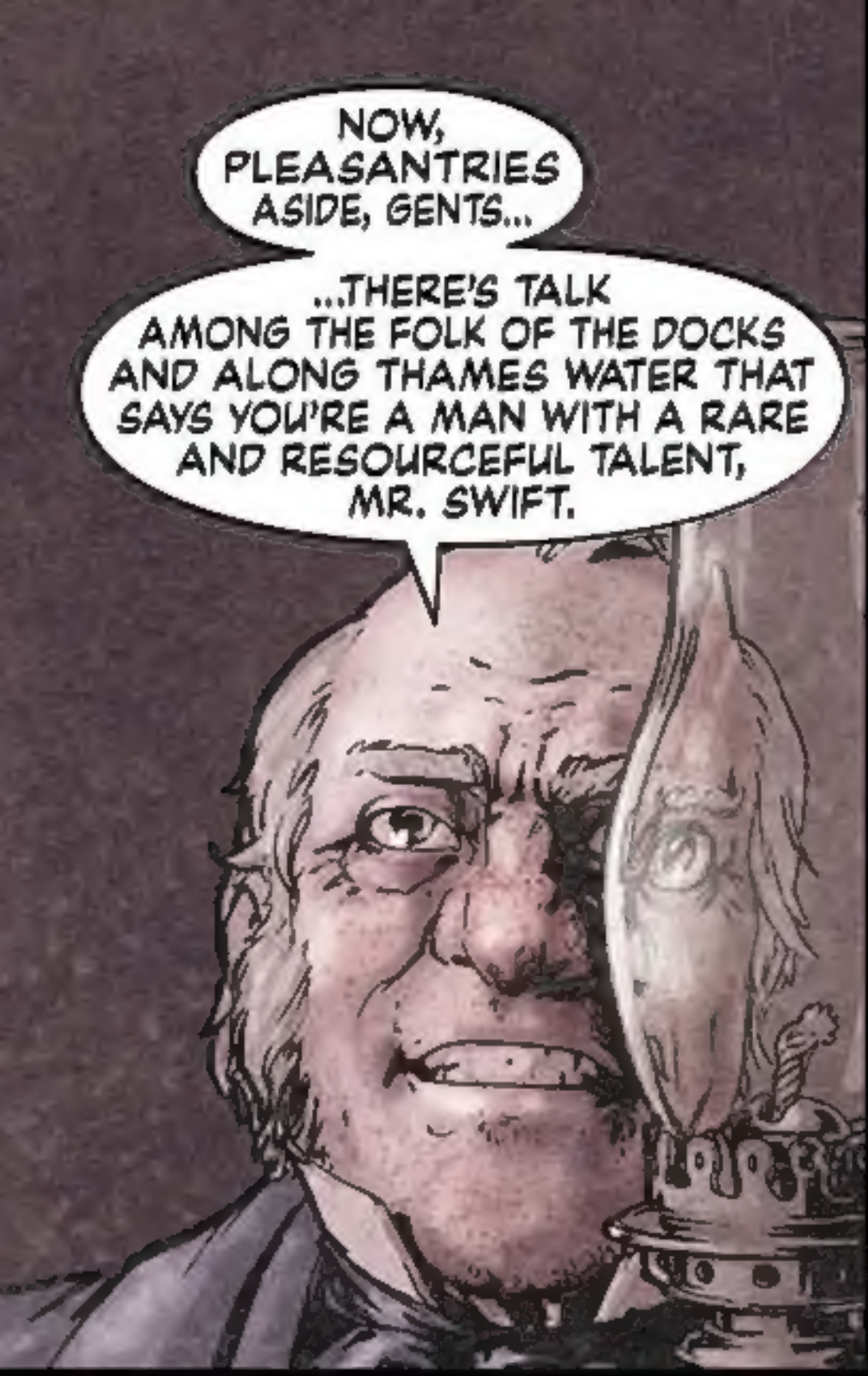
...LET ME AVAIL HER OF A SEAT. AND THIS IS...? YOUR DAUGHTER, PERHAPS?

MY **WIFE**. N' THANK YOU FOR THE KINDNESS. ADELE'D THANK YOU HERSELF BUT CAN'T ON ACCOUNT O' HER BEING A MUTE. STILL...

...THE **SWEETEST** THING SHE IS, AND ME THE **LUCKIEST** MAN.

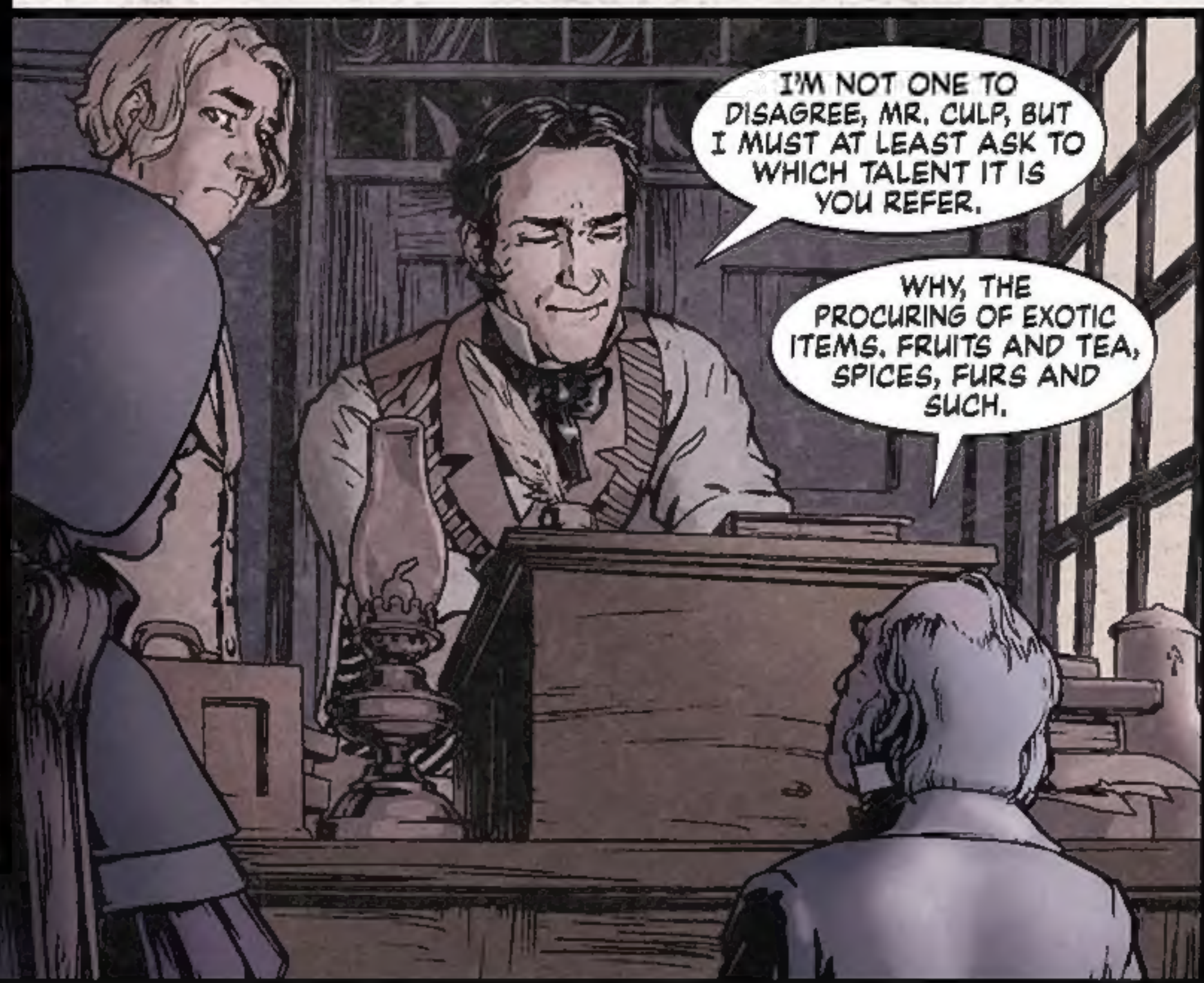
NO DISAGREEMENT THERE.





NOW,  
PLEASANTRIES  
ASIDE, GENTS...

...THERE'S TALK  
AMONG THE FOLK OF THE DOCKS  
AND ALONG THAMES WATER THAT  
SAYS YOU'RE A MAN WITH A RARE  
AND RESOURCEFUL TALENT,  
MR. SWIFT.



I'M NOT ONE TO  
DISAGREE, MR. CULP, BUT  
I MUST AT LEAST ASK TO  
WHICH TALENT IT IS  
YOU REFER.

WHY, THE  
PROCURING OF EXOTIC  
ITEMS. FRUITS AND TEA,  
SPICES, FURS AND  
SUCH.



I AM MERELY A SOCIAL CREATURE.  
I MAKE INTRODUCTIONS. A SHIP, A  
SHOP, AND ME IN BETWEEN.



AND, OF COURSE, MY STERLING  
ASSOCIATION WITH THE RIVER  
BARGEES AS A MEANS OF SUPPLYING  
THE NORTH DOESN'T HURT.

YOU SEEK  
SOME SORT OF  
**EXTRALOCAL**  
WARE, I TAKE  
IT.

I DO, I DO.  
I MENTIONED  
**FUR--**



FUR? I CAN GET  
YOU FUR.

AND SO CAN  
MOST ANY FURRIER  
EAST OF THE ELEPHANT..  
NO, I'M MORE WONDERING,  
WELL...ER...HOW ARE YOU AT  
GETTING ME A CREATURE  
STILL **WEARING**  
THEIRS?

MEANING?



MEANING  
A **LION**, MR. SWIFT.  
COULD YOU GET ME  
A LION?

*I accepted the undertaking despite  
Culp offering me no explanation as  
to why he wanted the animal.*

*I suppose it was the challenge of  
acquiring the cat, not to mention the  
not-inconsiderable coin he offered  
for my efforts.*



I would see Culp periodically after that as he inquired on my progress and at other times merely to inquire upon my well-being.

I found him fascinating. Midzets and dwarfs were no strangers to London streets at that time, so my enchantment stemmed from another more magnetic aspect of the man.

His manner--  
no, no--his  
essence.

As if he hungered  
for something that  
even he himself  
could neither define  
nor imagine.



Charles did not approve.

IT'S NOT HIS SIZE,  
IT'S HIS MANNER, FOR HEAVEN'S  
SAKE. CAN'T YOU SEE?

AND HIS WIFE...**BARELY**  
A CHILD, AND MUTE? I FEAR  
THE GIRL IS SIMPLE AND IN THAT  
BRUTE'S CLUTCHES.

THE  
MAN'S NO  
GOOD!

He'd later depict Dick  
Swiveller, the character he  
based upon me in "The  
Old Curiosity Shop," as  
someone who was easily led,  
so I suppose Charles saw  
me for the fellow I was at  
that time.

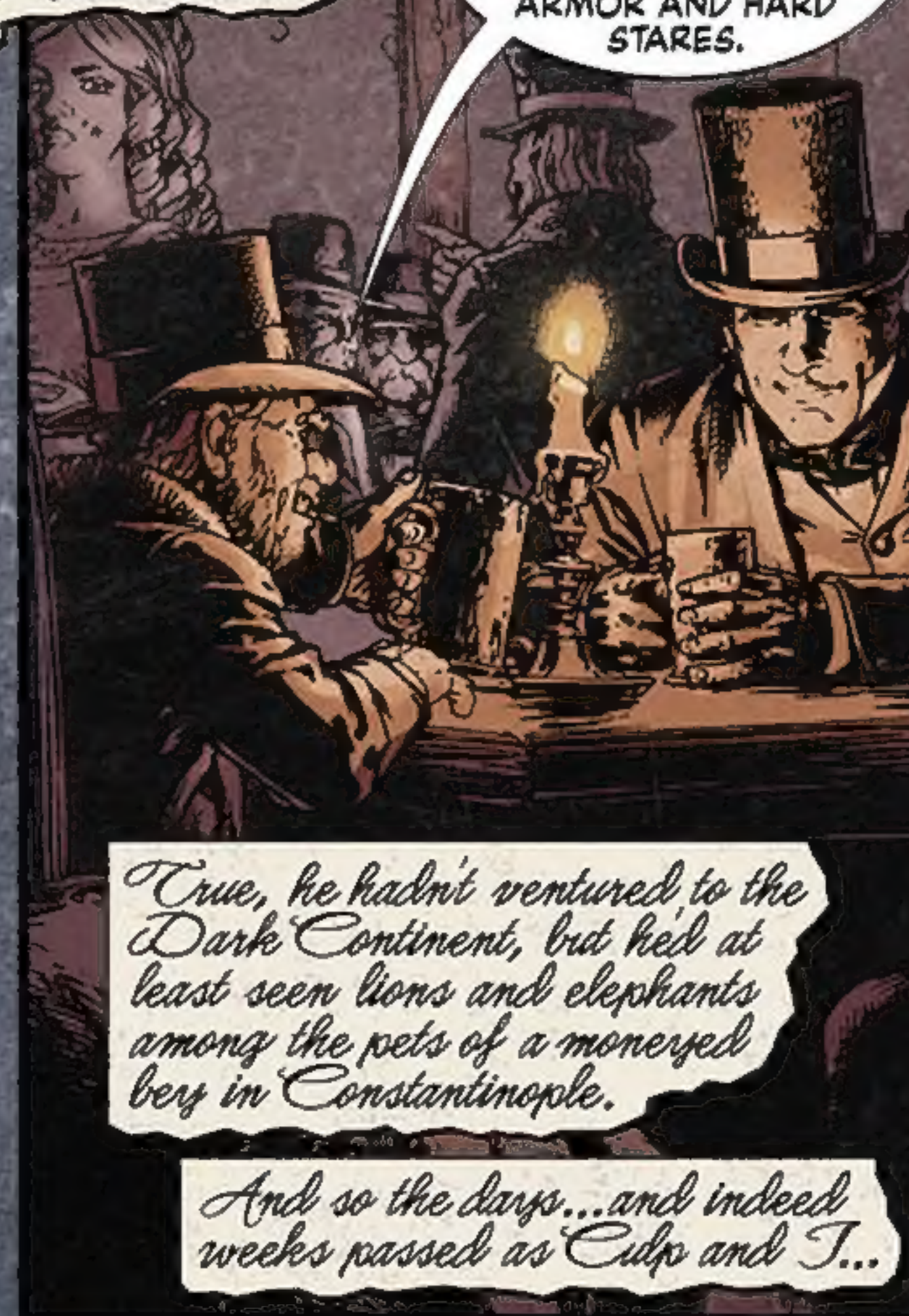


The added lure of Culp  
for me...a traveler he, this  
little man...East as far as  
Markovia, South as far as  
blue Mediterranean  
waters.

TOWERS THAT  
STRETCH UP TO HEAVEN--  
SEEMED LIKE, AT LEAST--  
'COURSE, WITH MY HEIGHT A  
LOT DOES--HAHA! BIG OLD  
GUARDS THEY HAD, TOO.  
MEAN COVES, ALL BRASS  
ARMOR AND HARD  
STARES.

True, he hadn't ventured to the  
Dark Continent, but he'd at  
least seen lions and elephants  
among the pets of a moneyed  
berg in Constantinople.

And so the days...and indeed  
weeks passed as Culp and I...



SO, "BARNABY  
RUDGE"--QUAINT  
TITLE, I'LL GIVE  
YOU THAT.

QUAINT? I'D  
HOPED FOR MORE  
THAN QUAINT, DICK.  
HEAVENS!

...and  
Charles  
and I...



...and of course  
my family...

...all of them  
filling my time.



A lion arrived in July--dead,  
I'm sorry to say, from the journey's  
rigors. (Although I made some  
small profit by selling the body to  
a college in Edinburgh that had the  
creature stuffed and on display by  
September.)



September. It was  
the end of that month  
when a young lioness,  
just shy of fully  
mature, was unloaded  
on the quayside at  
Rotherhithe.



Culp was  
delighted.

NO, DICKIE, LUV,  
YOU MUST, YOU ASSO-  
LUTELY **MUST** COME. IT'S  
A RIGHT OLD SPREAD.  
IT'S A GALA.

RUM SPOT TO HAVE  
IT, I'LL GIVE YOU THAT. STILL...  
MY CLIENT--WEALTHY, POWERFUL  
CLIENT--HE **INSISTS**.

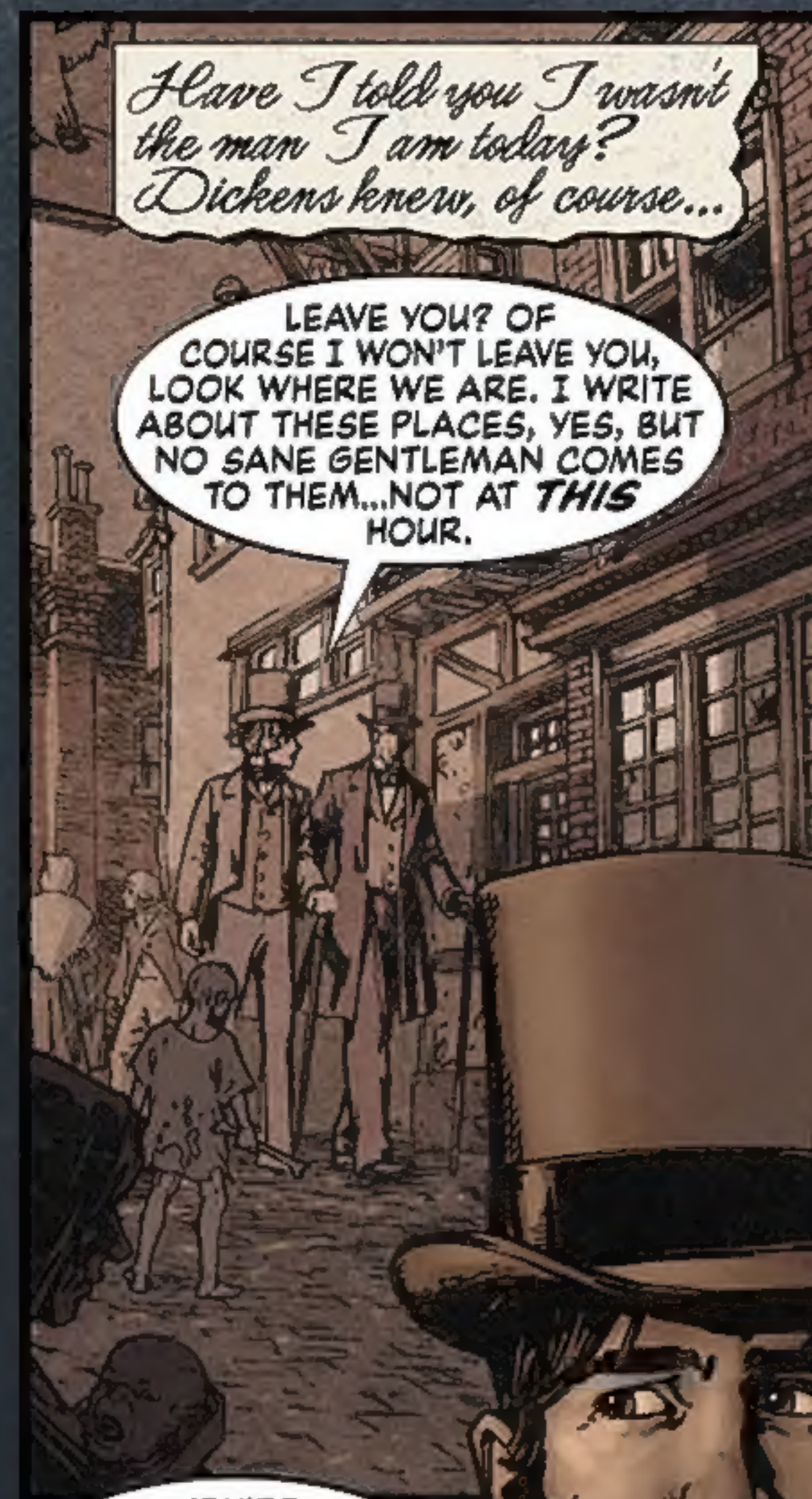
What did I expect? I'm not  
sure. Shaking the hand of a  
wealthy man I'd helped...  
how could that be bad?



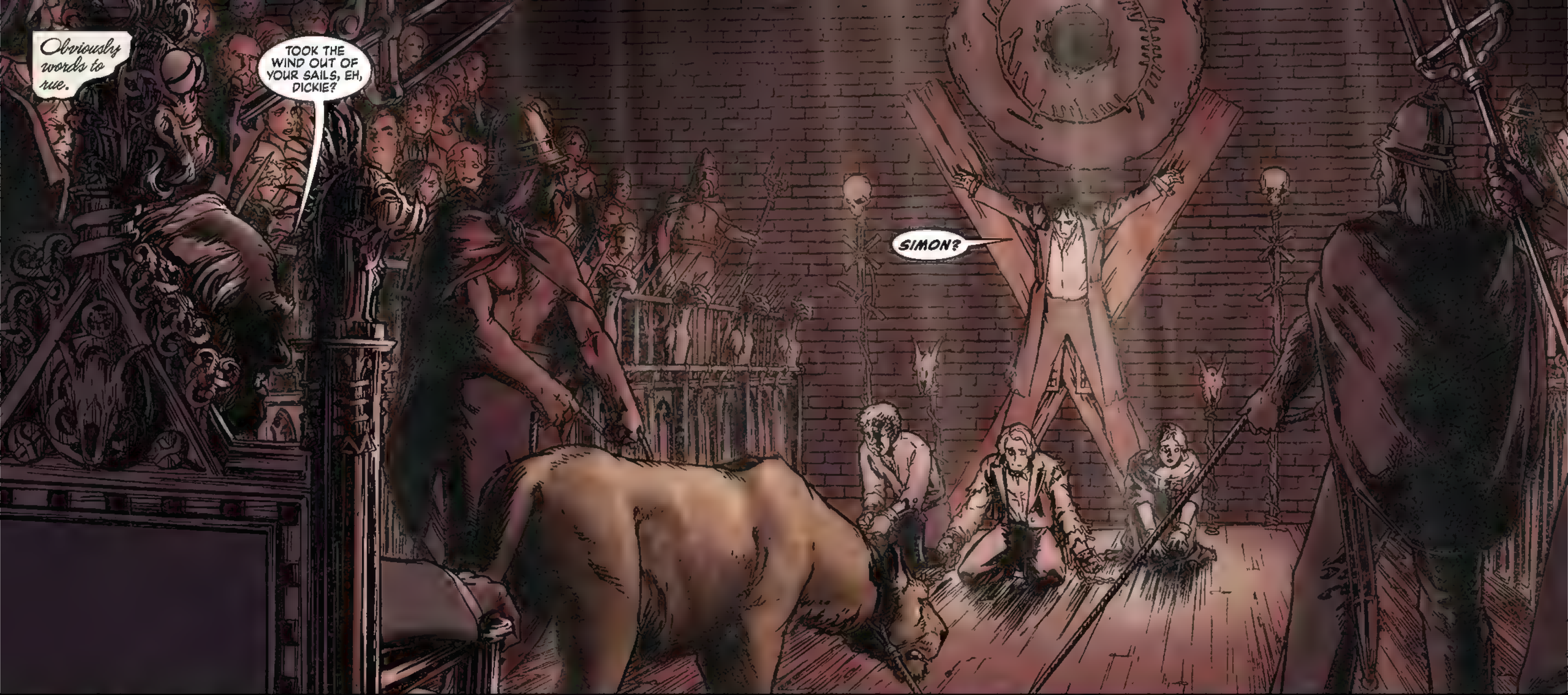
Have I told you I wasn't  
the man I am today?  
Dickens knew, of course...

LEAVE YOU? OF  
COURSE I WON'T LEAVE YOU,  
LOOK WHERE WE ARE. I WRITE  
ABOUT THESE PLACES, YES, BUT  
NO SANE GENTLEMAN COMES  
TO THEM...NOT AT **THIS**  
HOUR.

YOU'RE  
BEING DRAMATIC,  
CHARLES--AS USUAL. IT  
WILL ALL WORK OUT  
SWIMMINGLY.





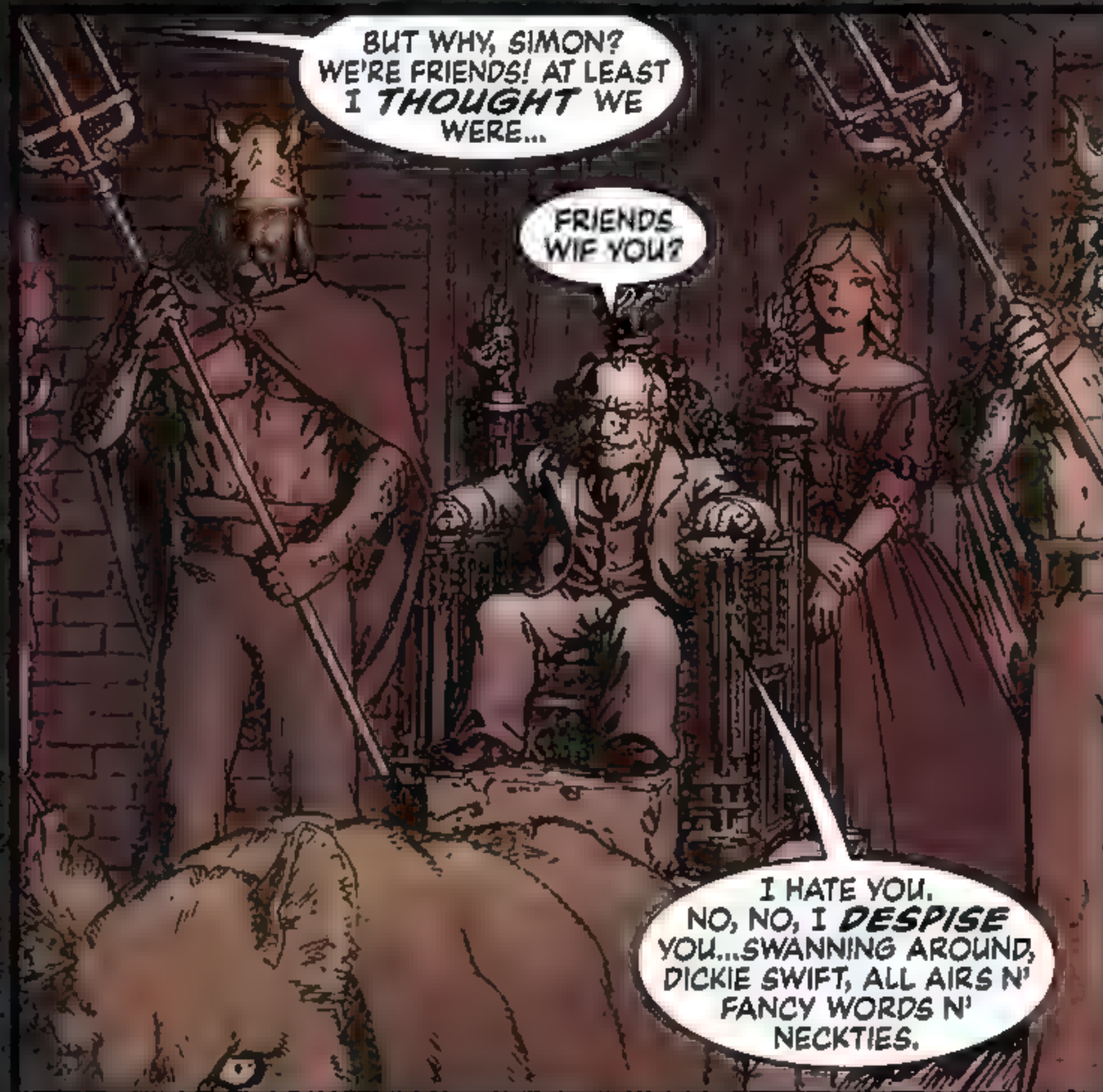


SIMON?



WHAT'S GOING ON?!  
YOUR COLLEAGUES ATTACKED  
CHARLES AND I...

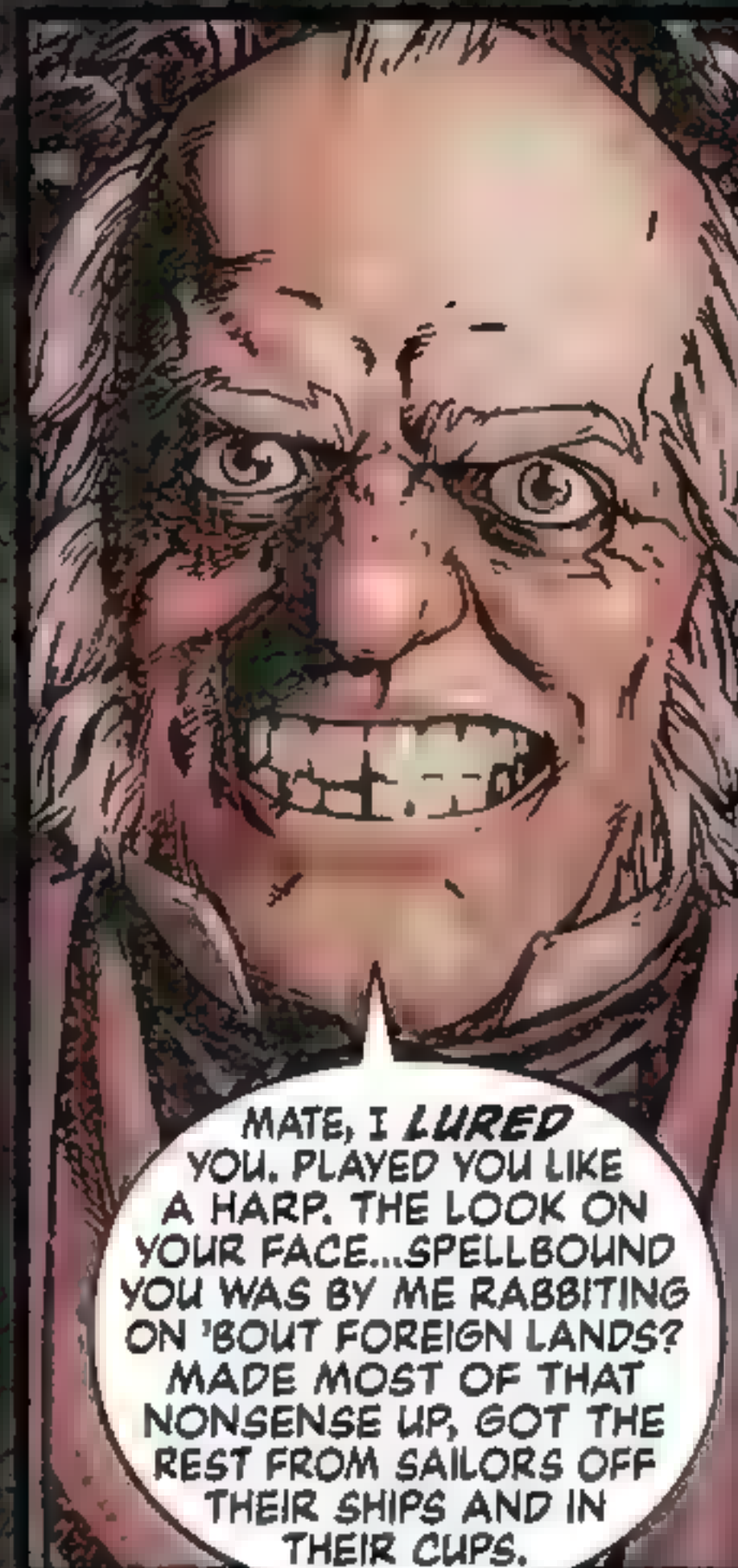
WELL,  
OBVIOUSLY YOU'VE  
BEEN DONE A GOOD'UN--  
LOOK AT'CHA, STRUNG UP  
LIKE A PHEASANT--N'  
ME, I COULDN'T BE  
HAPPIER.



BUT WHY, SIMON?  
WE'RE FRIENDS! AT LEAST  
I **THOUGHT** WE  
WERE...

FRIENDS  
WIF YOU?

I HATE YOU.  
NO, NO, I **DESPISE**  
YOU...SWANNING AROUND,  
DICKIE SWIFT, ALL AIRS N'  
FANCY WORDS N'  
NECKTIES.



MATE, I **LURED**  
YOU. PLAYED YOU LIKE  
A HARP. THE LOOK ON  
YOUR FACE...SPELLBOUND  
YOU WAS BY ME RABBETING  
ON 'BOUT FOREIGN LANDS?  
MADE MOST OF THAT  
NONSENSE UP, GOT THE  
REST FROM SAILORS OFF  
THEIR SHIPS AND IN  
THEIR CUPS.



WHY, CULP? WHAT  
COULD YOU **POSSIBLY**  
WANT... THIS ARENA? THE LION?  
IT'S LIKE SOMETHING FROM  
**BEPLAM**.

CAN'T HONESTLY  
SAY, TRUTHFULLY, YOU  
WAS PICKED, N' IT  
**WEREN'T** ME 'AT  
PICKED YA.

WHAT'CHER  
KNOW 'BOUT THE  
DARK ARTS, DICKIE?  
AN' I DON'T MEAN  
PAINTING OR  
NONE OF THAT.  
NO.



WHAT'CHER  
KNOW OF  
**MAGIC?**



Y'SEE, I  
KNOW WHAT  
I AM.

I WALK THE  
STREETS. I'VE HAD A  
LIFETIME CLOSER TO THE  
DIRT, AND MOST ALL THE  
WHILE LOOKING AT THE  
UNDERSIDE OF PEOPLE'S  
CHINS.

NO.

I  
CAN'T BE  
TALL.

BUT  
I CAN HAVE  
**POWER.**

FELL INTO  
LEARNING ABOUT THE  
DARK ARTS FROM MY OLD  
GRANDMUM. WITCH,  
SHE WAS. GYPSY  
WITCH.

HARD FOR ME, THOUGH, ON  
ACCOUNT O' ME NOT ABLE TO  
READ AND ALL, BUT I'M A  
**PERSISTENT** BLOKE, SO  
I FOUND MY OWN WAYS  
TO SCHOOL.

FOUND THESE  
ESTEEMED FOLKS TO  
SHARE MY HOPE AND  
INTERESTS. FOUND  
**SPELLS.**

FOUND A  
**GODDESS**  
WHO'D GRANT ME  
MY DREAMS.

RICHARD, ARE  
YOU **LISTENING**  
TO THIS?!

I'M **SORRY**,  
CHARLES. I SHOULD  
HAVE LISTENED TO YOU  
AND KEPT **CLEAR**  
OF HIM.



SPELL I'M ABOUT TO CAST WILL EVOKE--  
LIKE THAT WORD? EVOKE?--IT'LL SUMMON  
HER...**SCATHACH**. "SHE WHO  
STRIKES FEAR."

OR WILL,  
ONCE I'M  
DONE.

SO THIS--THE  
LION, RICHARD TIED UP  
THERE--HOW IN YOUR UNHINGED  
STATE DOES ALL...DOES **ANY**...  
**COULD** ANY OF IT GIVE  
YOU POWER?

IT CAME TO  
ME IN DREAMS...  
SOME SLUMBER, N'  
SOME OF THE PIPE,  
I CONFESS, BUT **ALL**  
OF THEM LIKE I WAS  
ENTERING A SPECIAL  
DREAMING PLACE,  
SO REAL THEY  
WERE.

THE VOICES  
TOLD ME THEY  
NEEDED SACRIFICES...  
THAT'S THESE OFF'A  
THE STREET AND YOU,  
THE NOTED CHARLES  
DICKENS, FOR GOOD  
MEASURE.

THEIR MURDER MUST BE FROM  
A PRIMAL CREATURE. A WILD THING.  
THOUGHT I MIGHT GO BEAR, BUT I  
KNEW...IN MY HEART I KNEW A  
LION'D DO THE TRICK.

AND **YOU**, DICKIE, YOU WERE REQUEST-  
ED **SPECIAL**-LIKE...FROM SCATHACH  
HERSELF. NOT SURE WHY, BUT YOU'RE  
NOT JUST ANYONE. NO.

YEAH, FUNNY  
HOW THAT PLAYED  
OUT. MET YOU TO GET  
THE LION, BUT AFTER-  
WARDS...MY DREAM  
WHISPERS TOLD ME  
THE GREAT SCATHACH  
WANTED **YOU**.

NOW. THE  
SPELL.

HE'S  
**INSANE, DICK!**  
**MADNESS!**

OH, YOU  
THINK? **MAYBE**  
YOU'RE RIGHT...  
MAYBE THIS **IS**  
MAD. STILL...





THAT'S  
IT! FREE THE  
BEAST!  
THE  
SPELL NEEDS  
BLOOD!

...S' BLEEDIN'  
BEAUTIFUL  
N' ALL.

RRRRRRR

RAOW!

WAIT! NUHNO...  
S' NOT SUPPOSED  
T--

RICHARD?!

RICHARD!!



*If I recall the moment I became the Shade--the instant--it is just that, a moment in time.*

*But simultaneously in my memory it took years.*

*Cast adrift on an ebony tide. Agony, bliss, icy numbness, conflagrant light, anger, calm.*

*And I became someone new.*

*Fleeting memories of my wife...*

*...of my sons...*

*...of my old life were as the memories of another man.*

*Then, like the Richard Swift of old, those memories ebbed to nothing.*

*Understand that, while I was feeling and drifting, I had no awareness of my actions in the real world, and to this day no recollection.*

*I wish my actions had been the same for Culp's wife...*


**ADELE!  
ADELE!**

*Although, as he subsequently related to me, I apparently saved Charles...*

*...dragging him from the strygan mass and hurling him to where he found purchase away from the dark.*

*...for she seemed but a witless vassal in his thrall and ill-deserving of her fate.*





*The lion died, too,  
I'm sorry to say.*

*But my own  
"death" was  
upon me by  
this time...*

*For in that  
moment the  
blackness  
overcame  
me.*

*And I was  
oblivion.*





*I emerged from  
my idyll with a  
mind as witless  
as the late Mrs.  
Culpo.*

*Scant  
memory.*

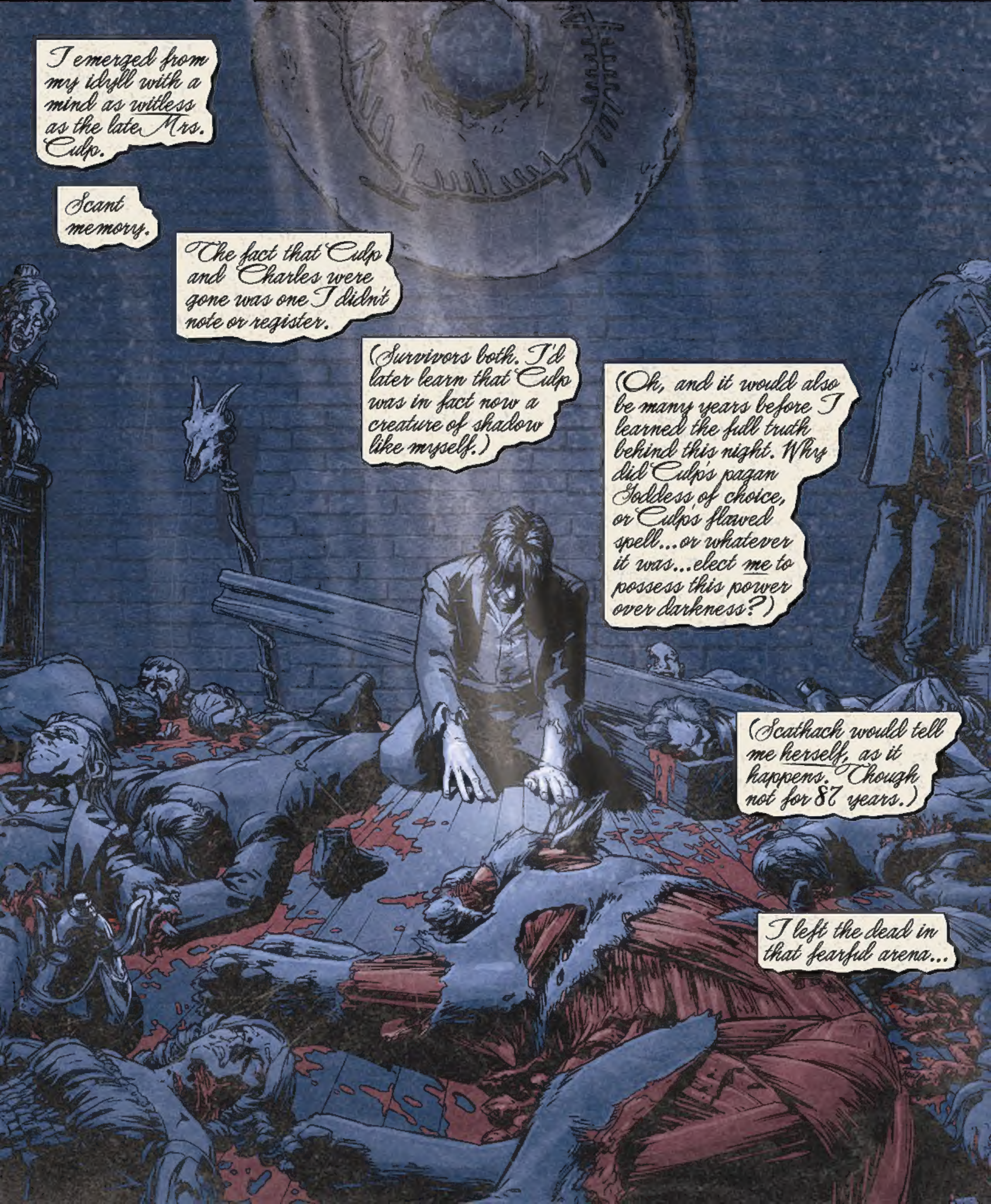
*The fact that Culpo  
and Charles were  
gone was one I didn't  
note or register.*

*(Survivors both. I'd  
later learn that Culpo  
was in fact now a  
creature of shadow  
like myself.)*

*(Oh, and it would also  
be many years before I  
learned the full truth  
behind this night. Why  
did Culpo's pagan  
Goddess, of choice,  
or Culpo's flawed  
spell...or whatever  
it was...elect me to  
possess this power  
over darkness?)*

*(Scathack would tell  
me herself, as it  
happens. Though  
not for 87 years.)*

*I left the dead in  
that fearful arena...*





...and walked as if within a dream...

...stumbling into the light...

...and was only half aware of hooves on cobblestones as Piers Ludlow's carriage came upon me.

ARE YOU **SOUND**, SIR? ARE YOU **WELL**?

**NO**, THOUGH I **THANK** YOU FOR ASKING ME. I AM **UNCLEAR**.

I FEAR MY **MEMORY** HAS BEEN TAKEN.

I confess in the now of Opal and my life today, I try as often as I am able to think of my past actions as those of another man.

Richard Swift. Naïve, overly trusting, overly concerned with money, too, if I gather my faults honestly.

But I was also a husband and a father...flawed in those departments, too, I'm sure, but at least...at least...what?

What can I say? Truthfully, I thought it best to leave them...to spare them what I had become, but I see now there was nothing gallant about my decision...

...and it was this that perhaps led to the weakness in the character of my bloodline that manifested itself in the present. I am sad, I am guilty.

But...

I know, too, that the future may yet offer me respite... Opal, Hope and tomorrow... if I face that tomorrow with a greater understanding of my weaknesses.

The End



FROM THE WRITER OF SUPERMAN &  
JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA

# JAMES ROBINSON

with **TONY HARRIS**

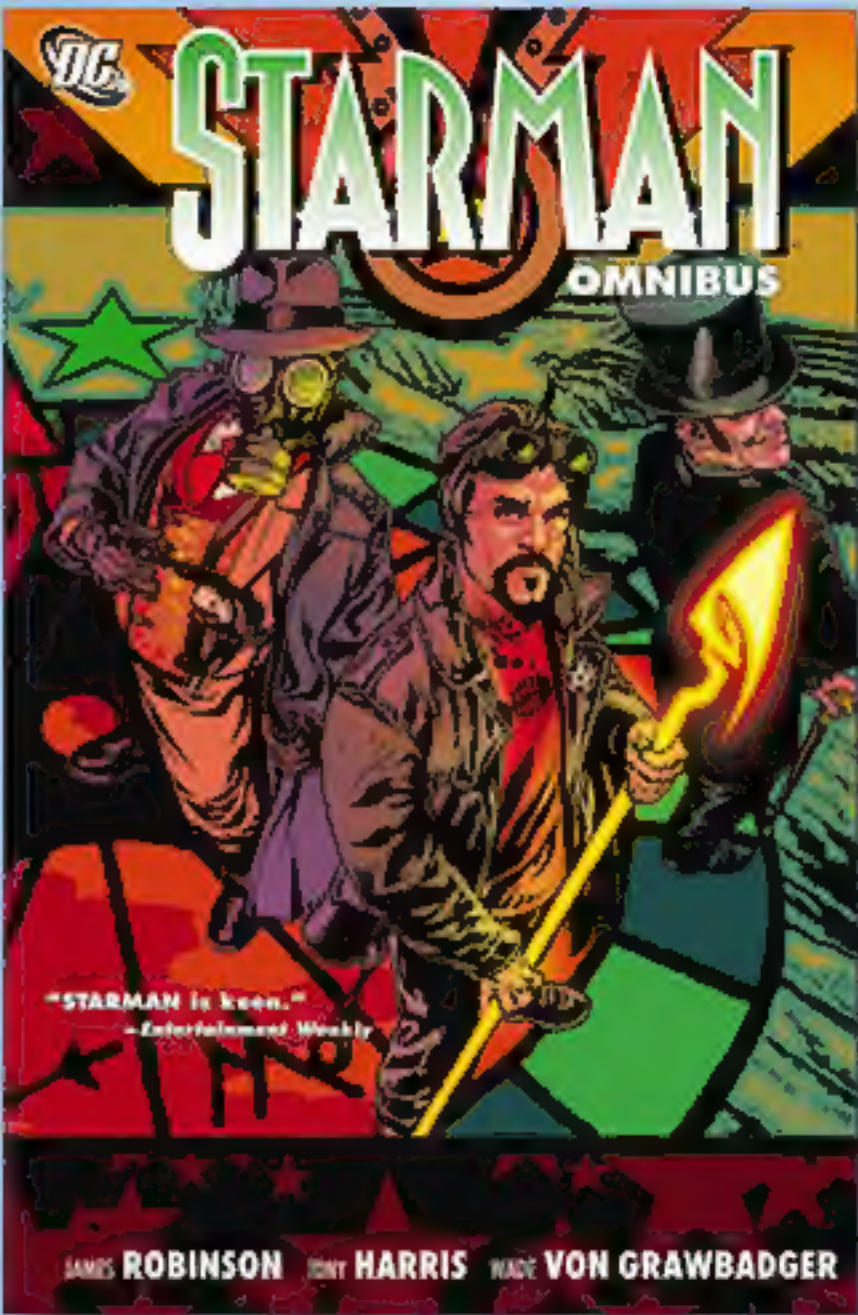
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- ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

*"What'll make THE STARMAN OMNIBUS  
resonate with newcomers...is how well  
[James] Robinson and [Tony] Harris  
articulated the character of Jack Knight,  
a slacker with idiosyncratic tastes and ideals that  
didn't originate in any corporate boardroom."*  
-THE ONION

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- STARMAN OMNIBUS VOL. 2
- STARMAN OMNIBUS VOL. 3
- STARMAN OMNIBUS VOL. 4
- STARMAN OMNIBUS VOL. 5



STARMAN OMNIBUS  
VOL. 2



with  
**TONY HARRIS**

STARMAN OMNIBUS  
VOL. 3



with  
**TONY HARRIS**  
& others

STARMAN OMNIBUS  
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with  
**TONY HARRIS**  
& others

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